

Message Text

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ACTION SCI-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

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FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0000

C O N F I D E N T I A L PARIS 16632

E.O. 11652

TAGS: TSPA, TGEN

SUBJECT: SPACE COOPERATION: FRENCH REACTION TO
DEPARTMENT'S LETTER DISAPPROVING SPACE COOPERATION
BETWEEN MARTIN-MARIETTA AND SNIAS

1. MAURICE LEVY, PRESIDENT OF THE FRENCH SPACE AGENCY (CNES) AND STILL CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (ESRO), APPROACHED SCIATT AT JULY 4 RECEPTION AND SPOKE VIGOROUSLY OF HIS DISAPPOINTMENT WITH THE LETTER FROM THE DEPARTMENT DISAPPROVING THE PROPOSED COOPERATION BETWEEN MARTIN-MARIETTA AND THE FRENCH FIRM SNIAS (AEROSPATIALE) IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE ARIANE SPACE LAUNCHER. WHAT HE TOOK EXCEPTION TO WAS NOT SO MUCH THE DISAPPROVAL ITSELF, WHICH HE EXPECTED, BUT "THE TONE" OF THE LETTER AND THE CLOSED DOOR HE THOUGHT IT PRESENTED TO FUTURE MEANINGFUL COOPERATION BETWEEN THE U.S. AND EUROPE IN DEVELOPING SPACE TECHNOLOGY. SINCE THE EMBASSY HAD NOT RECEIVED A COPY OF THE LETTER (DATED JUNE 26 FROM PACKER TO HOCKER OF ESRO) UNTIL LEVY SENT A COPY THE FOLLOWING DAY, SCIATT COULD ONLY NOTE LEVY'S REMARKS AND PROMISE TO LOOK INTO THE MATTER.

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2. IT SHOULD BE NOTED THAT THE ARIANE LAUNCHER DE-

VELOPMENT PROGRAM, THOUGH UNDER ESRO MANAGEMENT, IS ESSENTIALLY A FRENCH PROGRAM. THE FRENCH ARE PAYING OVER 60 PERCENT OF THE COST AND PERHAPS SUBSTANTIALLY MORE IF THERE ARE COST OVERRUNS.

3. COMMENT: THE POLICY DECISION SET FORTH IN THE DEPARTMENT'S LETTER APPEARS TO BE THE RESULT OF AN INTERAGENCY DECISION. WITHOUT ALL THE FACTS AVAILABLE TO THE WASHINGTON AGENCIES, WE ARE UNABLE TO COMMENT ON THAT DECISION. NEVERTHELESS, WE WISH TO EXPRESS OUR REGRET IN THE WAY THAT THIS DECISION WAS MADE KNOWN TO ESRO AND THE GOF. THE NEW FRENCH GOVERNMENT HAS MADE AN EFFORT DURING ITS FIRST WEEKS IN OFFICE TO IMPROVE THE TONE OF FRANCO-AMERICAN RELATIONS. IN THIS NEW CLIMATE WE FEEL IT IS PARTICULARLY IMPORTANT FOR THE U.S. TO TAKE ACCOUNT OF FRENCH SENSITIVITIES IN OUR DIALOGUE. HENCE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN PREFERABLE IN OUR VIEW HAD THE DEPARTMENT INFORMED EMBASSY OF THE DECISION IN THE MARTIN-MARIETTA - SNIAS CASE SO THAT WE COULD HAVE TRIED TO PRESENT IT TO ESRO AND THE FRENCH IN A WAY LEAST LIKELY TO AFFECT OVERALL COOPERATION WITH EUROPE AND FRANCE.

IRWIN

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